

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated September 7, 2006. Claims 1 to 7 are pending in the application, of which Claims 1 and 7 are independent. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The drawings were objected to as allegedly not showing every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Applicants respectfully direct the Examiner's attention to Fig. 5 and Fig. 9 wherein a TOP signal line is shown. Furthermore, Figs. 3, 8, 7 and 10 illustrate the operation of the TOP signal in regard to both monochromatic and color image formation. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection.

Claims 1 to 7 were objected to as allegedly failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention or discovery. Specifically, it was alleged that the claims included two instances of "color image" and "monochrome image" without proper antecedent basis. Applicant submits that the first instances "color image" and "monochrome image" are merely identifiers for formation modes, explicitly "a color image formation mode" and a "monochrome image mode." Therefore, Applicant submits that there are not two different instances of "color image" and "monochrome image" as alleged in the Office Action. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

Claims 2 to 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as allegedly being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. While Claims 2 to 4 where

indicated as rejected, the Detailed Action only addressed Claims 2 and 3. Accordingly and without conceding the correctness of the rejection, Applicant has amended Claims 2 and 3 to recite an “outputting part” rather than “outputting parts.” Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection.

If, upon review, the Examiner would like to provide detailed comments regarding Claim 4, the Examiner is urged to contact Applicant’s representative as indicated below to provide details of the alleged rejection of Claim 4.

Claims 1, 2, 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 6,040,924 (Tamagaki) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,192,207 (Yamamoto). Claim 3 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Tamagaki in view of Yamamoto, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 6,252,618 (Coriale). Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Tamagaki in view of Yamamoto, and in further view of JP 2-231344 (Kioka). Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

The present invention concerns color and monochrome image formation on a single apparatus. According to the invention, a timing signal outputting part outputs via a common signal line to an image formation controller, a timing signal for instructing a formation of a first color component image in a color image formation mode or a formation of a black component image in a monochromatic image formation mode.

Turning to specific claim language, amended independent Claim 1 is directed to an image processing apparatus for forming a visible image on a recording medium conveyed by conveying means, based on an image data sent from an image formation controller, in a color image formation mode for forming a color image or a

monochromatic image formation mode for forming a monochromatic image. The apparatus includes a plurality of color component image forming units that form a color component image respectively corresponding to a color component including at least black; a timing signal outputting part that outputs via a common signal line to the image formation controller, a timing signal for instructing a formation of a first color component image in the color image formation mode or a formation of a black component image in the monochromatic image formation mode. When a monochromatic image is to be formed on a preceding recording medium and a color image is to be formed on a succeeding recording medium, the signal outputting means outputs the timing signal corresponding to the succeeding recording medium earlier than the timing signal corresponding to the preceding recording medium.

In contrast, Tamagaki discloses pulse width modulation based on color image data of each color, that is, Tamagaki discloses uses pulse width modulation for encoding image data sent from an image forming controller to an image formation system. (See Tamagaki, column 10, lines 4 to 9 and Fig. 2. Tamagaki, however, fails to disclose a timing signal for instructing a formation of a first color component image in said color image formation mode or a formation of a black component image in said monochromatic image formation mode.

Furthermore, Yamamoto discloses a timing diagram for photosensitive drums (See Fig. 15). However, the labels “FULL-COLOR MODE” and “MONOCHROME MODE” in the figure merely indicate the mode of operation of the photosensitive drums. These labels do not indicate a separate timing signal as alleged in the Office Action.

Therefore, Tamagaki and Yamamoto, either alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all of the features of Claim 1. Specifically Tamagaki and Yamamoto fail to disclose or suggest at least the features of an outputting part that outputs via a common signal line to the image formation controller, a timing signal for instructing a formation of a first color component image in the color image formation mode or a formation of a black component image in the monochromatic image formation mode and when a monochromatic image is to be formed on a preceding recording medium and a color image is to be formed on a succeeding recording medium, the signal outputting means outputs the timing signal corresponding to the succeeding recording medium earlier than the timing signal corresponding to the preceding recording medium. In light of these deficiencies of Tamagaki and Yamamoto, Applicant submits that amended independent Claim 1 is now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

Amended independent Claim 7 is directed to a method substantially in accordance with the apparatus of Claim 7. Accordingly, Applicant submits that Claim 7 is also now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests same.

The other pending claims in this application are each dependent from the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed allowable for the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, individual consideration of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested at the Examiner's earliest convenience.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, CA office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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